

City Council of the Mayor and Council of New Castle

Budget Workshop Meeting

Town Hall, 2nd Floor Council Chambers

Thursday, June 10, 2010, 6 p.m.

Present:

Council President William Barthel
Councilperson John Gaworski
Councilperson Teel Petty
Councilperson Ted Megginson
Councilperson John Cochran

Also Present: Treasurer Janet Carlin, City Administrator Cathryn Thomas, Finance Manager/HR Director Marian Delaney, Police Chief Kevin McDerby, Public Works Supervisor George O'Neal

President Barthel called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. Roll call was taken.

Mr. O'Neal presented an overview of budget item requests for the Public Services Department. Included in his report were several requests from Mr. Bergstrom's department. Training and development, updating of the Code, legal notices, resource materials and publications, professional membership, and permit tracking software were presented.

Administrator Thomas noted that the City has been trying to integrate various software systems (finance, building permit, land management), but no single package incorporates everything. We are trying to avoid having to make entries more than once. Ms. Delaney said the three they have looked at are not yet working together. One vendor she has talked to has asked to be reconsidered because they are closer to incorporating the permitting portion to their finance portion. *(Further discussion about the best options took place.)* President Barthel suggested it may be prudent to budget funds for technology for next year to give these vendors more time to develop something more compatible and proven.

Mr. O'Neal continued his report. Computer software and hardware (used to track maintenance on police vehicles, garbage trucks), office supplies, operating supplies, postal, revolving fund, fuel and lubricants, landfill fee, DSWA recycling, small tool/equipment repairs and maintenance, radios and repairs were all covered.

Chief McDerby informed that the federal government is limiting the number of frequencies as far as radios go. The City's radios will be inoperable in a year or two. Some of our radios can be reprogrammed but a number cannot be worked on. He has talked to Delmarva Communications about a two-channel digital system that would allow the police to use one frequency and Municipal Services could use the other frequency. In emergencies both agencies could all use the same frequency. He believes it would be a good idea to budget to upgrade the police and Municipal Services radio system (10-11 radios) at the same time. This would be a long-term solution to a

problem that will exist in a year or two. He also informed of information on GPS tracking that is available with this system. It would allow the police department and Municipal Services to track our vehicles. This is a capability of the system if we wanted to consider funding in the future.

Other items in Mr. O'Neal's report included truck and vehicle repair/maintenance, uniforms, special event supplies (Separation Day, Day in Old New Castle, concerts), special event overtime, street materials (cold patch, blacktop, crusher run, dirt, stone), and salt.

Administrator Thomas reported on recycling and costs involved. Also discussed was consideration of setting up a reserve account for a deferred trash rate and providing tax revenue to the reserve account to help save the money needed when the deferred payment will be required to be made in year three of the trash contract. Other options were discussed.

Mr. O'Neal continued his report. Outside contractors, equipment rental, parks and properties, beautification and landscaping were discussed. He would like to get a second person to assist with additional responsibilities (Western Gateway) with beautification and landscaping beginning next year. *(Administrator Thomas noted there is still some money with the grant that was for the original contract and one years' maintenance with the option for another years' maintenance. She approached the State once about hiring an additional part-time person now but was denied. She will go back to the State and ask to hire someone since we have money left over in the contract and see how they respond.)* Mr. O'Neal said that the current beautification employee is also maintaining the Heritage Trail that is not part of her responsibilities.

Mrs. Petty would like ground carpeting for the playgrounds. Mr. O'Neal said they are getting 300 yards now and a total of 800 yards of wood carpet will be needed. Chief McDerby said that installation can be done by temporary employees rather than contract employees thus saving half the money for installation. We can budget to do all the parks now or piecemeal. We will concentrate on the swing-set areas. Mrs. Petty noted that weed control is needed. Chemicals can be used but Mr. O'Neal said that someone would need to monitor the area until the area is dry.

Mrs. Petty questioned whether the bench sponsored by Premcor had been labeled as such and if their donation could be used towards offsetting wood carpet costs. Discussion followed.

Mr. O'Neal reported the two truck leases are paid off. They are going to lease a new copier under State contract at a lower rate than the current vendor.

Chief McDerby said he spoke to Administrator Thomas and Mr. Megginson and met with an Enterprise Flasher company representative at the scene (7th and Delaware). They can put in two lighted barricades and detour signs referring drivers to 6th Street for 30 days to do a study and compare the numbers with numbers that Newark Police have provided.

Concerning the Buttonwood Barricade at Howell Drive, Chief McDerby said the controversy may be that the City line may in the street at Buttonwood. We need to get a survey done before installing a gate, to ensure it is installed within the City and not on County property. The barricades that currently exist may be beyond City property. *(Discussion about the cost for the survey followed.)*

Administrator Thomas distributed a two-sided flyer providing the trash collection schedule that will take effect soon. A final mailing will be provided to all City residents. *(Discussion followed.)*

Administrator Thomas informed that the Trustees did approve Battery Park to be a 'carry-in, carry-out' trash location. Council proposed starting in mid-August. She prepared a generic poster to be posted in Battery Park this weekend in time for Separation Day that alerts the public to the upcoming change. *(Brief discussion took place.)*

Chief McDerby presented for Public Safety. Budget items included professional development, books and publications, computers, office supplies and equipment, operating supplies, equipment repair, film developing, administrative expenses, uniform maintenance and replacement, mandatory training, professional reimbursement, special events supplies, special events overtime, investigative funds and evidence testing, accreditation, motor fuel, radios/camera repair/radar (final year of camera replacement program), vehicle parts and repair, miscellaneous grants, Homeland Security grant, seasonal officers, and vehicles. He noted that many of his expenses are offset by grants but it is never known what will be awarded so he has kept expenses at the same level as last year.

He is asking for an increase for maintenance contracts. Five years ago the department purchased through a federal grant the voice recording system for the department. He was able to get a five year warranty at that time. He would like to purchase a warranty for next year.

He informed that the Trustees have approved funding for a replacement vehicle this year. There are two vehicles to be replaced this year. They are the 2003 Dodge Durango and the 2003 Dodge Stratus. Both vehicles have 90,000 miles on them. The Durango is the more expensive vehicle and he asked the Trustees to appropriate monies for replacing this vehicle. He researched the State contracts and determined that a four-wheel drive Tahoe will be the replacement vehicle. He provided a comparison between the Dodge Charger, Crown Victoria and the Tahoe. The Durango is in better condition and has a docking station for laptop capabilities. John Lloyd needs another vehicle with a docking station to replace his Jeep. It has been suggested that the Durango is a suitable vehicle for Mr. Lloyd's needs. Discussion followed about software and laptop computers.

Chief McDerby provided a brief history of the police vehicle fleet in his ten-year tenure. He adopted a five-year rotation for vehicles. There are now two (2) vehicles with high mileage that needs to be switched out. To replace the Dodge Stratus he is requesting a Dodge Avenger, which is on the State contract. It is an unmarked vehicle.

The final two items of his report were the lease of the copier and the police station lease (ends February 2014).

Chief McDerby stated that he did not include this in his budget presentation this year but the police department's records management system is 10 years old and is becoming less compatible with upgrades of computers. He asked the Trustees for funding this year and was turned down. He applied for a grant from the criminal justice community and was denied. He plans on approaching the Trustees again next year but if funding is not granted he will need to include this item in his budget at that time.

Discussion about various items in the budget followed.

Ms. Delaney stated that the DSWA monthly fee in the Public Services budget should be budgeted for June since they are paid for in July.

Administrator Thomas informed Council members that City Engineer David Athey has left URS and is now employed by Duffield Associates. He is still interested in continuing as the City Engineer and would like to speak to us. URS has also contacted us to express their interest in retaining the City Engineer position. Our City Planner is employed with URS. They are also interested in speaking with the City. She would like to have each group make a presentation just prior to an upcoming Council meeting. It is important to get this matter resolved expeditiously to ensure a full Board of Adjustment is in place should the need arise. The Council agreed to meet before the next Council meeting to address this matter.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn this meeting and go into Executive Session. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Turner
Evening Stenographer